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A
SERMON

Preached before the
Incorporated SOCIETY

FOR THE

*Propagation of the Gospel in
Foreign Parts;*

AT THEIR

ANNIVERSARY MEETING

IN THE

Parish-Church of St. *Mary-le-Bow* ;

On *Friday* the 21st of *February*, 1734.

BY

FRANCIS, Lord Bishop of *Chichester*.

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L O N D O N :

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*At the Anniversary Meeting of the Society
for the Propagation of the Gospel in
Foreign Parts.*

21st February, 1734.

AGREED, That the Thanks of the
SOCIETY be given to the Right Re-
verend the Lord Bishop of *Chichester*, for
his Sermon preached this Day before the
SOCIETY, and that he be desired to print
the same.

David Humphreys,
Secretary.





Rom. x. 13, 14, 15.

Whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord, shall be saved.

How then shall they call on him, in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a Preacher?

And how shall they preach, except they be sent?



THE Argument contained in these Words is too plain to need any Explication. Salvation is in the Gospel offer'd to all Men, to all Nations without Distinction, not confined to one People, as was the Law given by Moses. *Whosoever shall any where call upon the Name of the Lord, shall be capable*

pable of the Salvation purchased by him. The Gospel makes no Difference between the *Jew* and the *Greek*; that is, the Gentile, or People of other Nations: *For the same is Lord over all, and rich in Mercy and Goodness unto all that call upon him.* But to what Purpose is Salvation offer'd to all Men, if none be sent to make known these glad Tidings, and to declare the Conditions on which this Offer is made to them? To this End an Appointment of a Ministry is necessary, and that some Provision be made for the Maintenance of those who shall be sent. But if this be necessary, nothing can be a more convincing Proof of the great Usefulness of the Society here assembled, whose chief Design and Care is to propagate the Knowledge of this Salvation into the new World, into the Plantations and Colonies we have in *America*, and the *West-Indies*, by the most effectual Ways they can, and particularly by providing a competent Number of fit Ministers. And as this and the other Provisions necessary for this good Work can't be supported and carried on, much less extended and enlarged, without a very considerable Expence, for which there is no other Fund, but what arises from their own voluntary Subscriptions, and the Charity of other pious and well-disposed Persons; whatever is an Argument for providing Ministers and other Requisites for this Mission, is, at the

the same Time an Argument to all serious and good Christians, to be liberal in their Contributions, according to the Abilities with which God hath blessed them, towards raising, from Time to Time, such Sums as shall be wanted for the effectual carrying on so great an Undertaking. I can't therefore, I apprehend, better answer the End of your Anniversary Meeting in this Place, than by employing the Time allowed me, in an Endeavour to excite the Benevolence and kind Assistance of good Men in Support of so useful a Design. And this, as to the Preacher's Part, is indeed an easy Task, when the Design he recommends is so excellent and useful in its End, and is conducted and carried into Execution by such unexceptionable, such just and proper Means, and when the Motives which induce to the Support of it, are so reasonable, and so well known. And Discourses of this Nature would be as effectual as they are easy, if those they are address'd to, had the Zeal of the first Christians, who thought nothing too much which it was in their Power to do, where the Honour of their God and Saviour, and the Good of their Fellow-Creatures call'd for an extraordinary Exertion of their Piety and Charity. Nothing makes the Preacher's Part on this Occasion difficult, but that you have already heard so many excellent Discourses upon the same Subject. But since the same Calls upon this Society are still

still continued, I should rather say, increased, which requires an Augmentation of Missionaries, and a proportionable Increase of other Expences, such Discourses are still necessary; and you will have Patience to hear the old Arguments in Favour of this Charity still urged to you, since Arguments, good in themselves, are not the less so, because they are not new, which, in such a Case as this, it would be unreasonable to expect; for what can be supposed to be left, which in a Course of so many Years has not been already said.

No Charity can stand clearer of all Objections, or have more reasonable and juster Motives to encourage it, than this you are now exhorted to. For, first, The Design of this Society is the most excellent and useful in its End, which is *to propagate the Gospel in Foreign Parts*: And this, as is set forth in the Charter by which they are incorporated, immediately and principally means, to propagate the Knowledge of the Gospel among our own People in such of our Colonies, “ which by
“ Reason of their Poverty are destitute and
“ unprovided of a Maintenance for Ministers, and the publick Worship of God;
“ and for Lack of such Support and Maintenance, many of them seem abandoned
“ to Atheism and Infidelity, or are in Danger of being perverted to Popish Superstition and Idolatry.” This Society therefore

fore is incorporated by the Royal Authority,
“ to receive, manage, and dispose of the
“ Charity of such pious Persons who shall
“ be willing to contribute to the Support of
“ a standing Ministry among them, and to-
“ wards such other Provision as shall be found
“ necessary for the successful Propagation of
“ the Gospel in those Parts.” This is the
End for which this Society is incorporated;
it is to rescue an infinite Number of poor
People, who stand in a near Relation to us,
as Subjects of the same Government, and
very useful ones too, out of a State of the
greatest Misery, and bring them into a Ca-
pacity of the greatest Happiness. For what
can be a State of greater Misery, than to be
over-run with Ignorance and Error, to be un-
der the Guilt and Dominion of Sin, and as
the just Reward of it, under the heavy Wrath
and Displeasure of Almighty God? And what
on the other hand can be greater Happiness,
than for rational Creatures to have their Un-
derstandings enlightned with the Knowledge
of divine Truths, to be assured of Pardon
and Forgiveness for past Offences, and to
have a well-grounded Hope upon Faith and
Repentance of an Eternal Salvation *reserved*
in the Heavens for them?

We may not perhaps be so sensible of the
Greatness either of this Misery, or of this
Happiness, because we never have experimen-
tally known what a State of Heathenism is,
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and do not see in their full Force the great Advantages of Christianity, thro' the ill Lives of too many who are Christians in Name only. But it is not the less true in itself, that the Gospel, in the Nature of it, is *the Power of God to Salvation*, and that without it Mankind were in the most miserable and deplorable Condition; and so they still are, where its Light has not shined; and it would be again so in all Parts, were the Light of the Gospel again withdrawn. Whoever considers the State the Gospel found the World in, or understands the true Design and Nature of it, as 'tis deliver'd to us in the New Testament, or the wonderful Effects it had in the Reformation of the World upon the first spreading of it, must be convinced of the Truth of this. Nothing is more evident, than that in the Gospel, Terms of Pardon and Salvation are offered to a wicked World, a World overspread with the grossest and most absurd Idolatry; and their Morality was of a Piece with their Theology. And what better could be expected? What Principles of Virtue could be learnt or cultivated under so much Ignorance? Or what Obligations to moral Duties could arise from the Belief and Worship of such Deities? What Influence from such Examples, but to copy after the Vices many of them were distinguish'd by? What had they to fear from their Displeasure, if they indulged themselves in Sin;

Sin; or what Favours had they to hope for, from a better Life? They neither knew the Excellence of Virtue, nor were taught the Rules of it; nor if they had, had they Motives laid before them strong enough to make them persevere in the Observance of them. For their Expectations of a future State were either none at all, or too weak to have any great Influence on their Practice: And while their Views were bounded within this Life, all Things happen'd too much alike to all, to impress deeply on them a just Sense of an over-ruling Providence, and make them prefer, in Obedience to it, Virtue and Self-denial to the immediate Pleasures and Interests with which Vice tempted them.

Thus, in the Reason of Things, it must have been in Nations so devoid of the Knowledge of God and Providence, and such in Fact we find it was in the Histories of those Times when this Ignorance prevailed. We need only look into the First Chapter of the Epistle to the *Romans*, to be convinced of the monstrous Idolatry and Immorality which the Gospel found the World immersed in. 'Tis to little Purpose to urge Reason against Fact, and to set up the *Law* and *Light of Nature* against *Revelation*, and to talk of the great Things that may be done by them, as if they were of themselves, and without other Assistance, sufficient to teach Men their Duty to God and to one another: History

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and Fact are on the other Side ; our Saviour found the World under the greatest Ignorance of the true God, and the grossest Corruption of Manners, which is the fullest Proof that can be, how much a Revelation was wanted. And the Event abundantly confirmed the same Truth ; prodigious was the Alteration made by the Preaching of the Gospel, with respect both to the Religion and Manners of Men ; Idolatry was banished from a great Part of the known World in a few Years, and Viciousness of Manners in infinite Numbers of Men vanished with it, and they became *new Creatures ; all Things were created anew in Christ Jesus*. The World soon found the Advantage of having a Teacher sent to them from God, who had both *Knowledge* sufficient to instruct them in the whole Will of God, and in all Parts of their Duty, both to him and to one another ; and also *Authority* sufficient to give his Precepts the Force of Laws, Laws that would reach the Thoughts and Heart, as well as the outward Actions, and to secure the Observance of them by the greatest and most powerful of all Sanctions, everlasting Punishment, and Life Eternal in a future State. And what was still a greater Blessing to Mankind, in this sad and deplorable Condition in which the Gospel found them, this heavenly Teacher, and he alone could give them what they most wanted and could least hope for, Assurance of Pardon upon

upon their repenting and believing in him for Sins past, and of the Assistance of the Holy Spirit to strengthen their Resolutions of Amendment, and support them in their Endeavours after Piety and Virtue for the Time to come. Such a Teacher from God was necessary to instruct and reform the World; such a Teacher in Fact did come, and did all that could be wished, more than could be expected by Men who had so greatly offended.

I shall not pursue this Argument farther, both because it would lead me too far from my present Business, and because it has very lately been the Subject of very able Pens, which have left the Infidel Cause without Excuse; and if Men, who pretend to desire Conviction would read, they must yeild. I am now speaking to a Christian Audience; to such I have already said enough; they believe the Scriptures, and are acquainted with them, more especially with the Books of the New Testament; there they find not only a History of our Saviour's Life and Death, what he did and suffer'd for us, but what he taught as the Will of God, what his Doctrines and Commands are, as deliver'd by himself. And in the *Acts*, a Book which can never be too much read, we see what the Gospel in Substance is, as deliver'd and taught by his Apostles; there we see in what Manner St. *Peter* and St. *Paul* preach'd to the *Jews*,

and in what Manner to the *Gentiles*, and in what Condition the Gospel found both of them. In the Epistle to the *Romans*, which, on Account of the Importance of the Subject, and the suitable Care it is treated with, hath deservedly the first Place among St. *Paul's* Writings; the Necessity of embracing the Gospel in order to Salvation, and to obtain Pardon of Sin, is fully shewn. In the first Chapter of that Epistle, St. *Paul*, as I have already observed, sets forth the extreme Wickedness of the Gentile World at that Time; in the second, that the *Jews* were little better; and from these Premises, in the third he infers the Necessity of Faith in Christ, *since all have sin'd, and come short of the Glory of God*, and no Justification can be had by Works; that therefore sinful Man can be justified only *by the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation thro' Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are past.* Whoever believes this Representation given by St. *Paul*, will want no other Arguments to convince him of the wretched State the World was in before our Saviour came, and consequently of the Necessity there was of his coming, to reform and redeem Lost Man; he will be thoroughly convinced, that the World was to an extreme Degree void of all true Religion and Virtue; and that if the
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Providence of God were at all concerned in the Government of the World, nothing could result from thence, but *a fearful looking for of Judgment*; that they were the *Children of Wrath*, being the *Children of Disobedience*, and in all Views most miserable; and that consequently the Revelation of the Gospel was the greatest Blessing God could, in this distress'd Condition, give to Man, by instructing him in all saving Knowledge, by giving him the plainest, and, at the same Time, the most perfect Rules of Duty, by *renewing him in the Spirit of his Mind* by the Assistance and Influence of his Grace, and by encouraging his Obedience by the Promise of the greatest Happiness.

But if this was the Condition of the Heathen World before it was enlightned by the Gospel, we may easily imagine what would be the Condition of our own *American Colonies*, if for Want of due Instruction in the Gospel, they were suffered to fall into Heathenism. We may be very sure they would fall into the same Ignorance of the true God, into the same Want of moral Principles, and into the same Corruption of Manners, tho' not perhaps into the same Idolatry. But that would not at all mend their Condition; Infidelity and Atheism have no Advantage of Idolatry; if there be a total Ignorance of the true God, whether Idolatry, or the Belief of no superior Beings be substituted in the Room of

of a true and rational Belief, there will be no Foundation left for moral Principles to be built on, and from thence will necessarily follow a total Corruption and Depravity of Manners. The Case therefore of these Colonies would, on this Supposition, be as deplorable as that of any other Heathen Nations.

Who then that considers the extreme Wretchedness of such a sinful State, and the Misery both Present and Future, consequent upon it, can possibly doubt with himself, whether any thing can be more excellent and useful than the Design of this Society, who, in Charity to the Souls of their poor Brethren, do all in their Power to propagate the Gospel among them, with no other View, but to deliver them from the greatest Misery, and bring them into a Capacity of the greatest Happiness?

Charity is, we all know, most eminently distinguished in the Gospel above all other Virtues; and next to the Love of God, the Love of our Neighbour is the greatest Duty of a Christian, and without which the Love of God is in vain pretended to; and we know likewise in what a Latitude our Saviour has explained the Duty of Loving our Neighbour, so as to take in all Mankind. But if this Love in us be sincere, it will exert itself according to its Power in all proper Instances, towards the Relief of those who want our Assistance in Distresses of every Kind.

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And to a faithful and chearful Discharge of this Duty, we have in the Gospel the greatest Encouragement, *Whoever, says our Saviour, shall give a Cup of cold Water, in the Name of a Disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his Reward;* and in the Description himself gives of the Last Judgment, the great Enquiry will be into our Works of Charity. And how strongly a lively Sense of their Obligations to this Duty operated on the first Christians, we see in the Acts of the Apostles; that *they sold their Possessions and Goods, and parted them to all Men, as every Man had need.* And their Charity was not confined to such as were present with them, or near to them, in the same Town, or City, or Parts adjacent; they had no such narrow Thoughts. We read *Acts xi.* that at *Antioch*, upon *Agabus* signifying to them *by the Spirit, that there would be a great Dearth, which came to pass in the Days of Claudius, the Disciples, every Man according to his Ability, determined to send Relief unto the Brethren, which dwelt in Judea: Which accordingly they did, and sent it to the Elders by the Hands of Barnabas and Paul;* those Elders probably, who were appointed in the seventh of the *Acts*, to take Care of the Poor, that the Apostles themselves might be wholly at Liberty to preach the Word. And still from remoter Parts the Disciples sent Relief to the
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Brethren at *Jerusalem*. St. Paul, in his first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, earnestly exhorts them to this Duty, as he had before done the *Galatians*. Now concerning the Collection for the Saints, as I have given Order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first Day of the Week, (the Lord's-Day) let every one of you lay by him in Store, as God hath prospered him. -- And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send to bring your *Liberality* to *Jerusalem*. And what Effect his Exhortations had, we find in his second Epistle to the *Corinthians*, in which he commends them for their ready Compliance with him: *As touching the Ministry to the Saints, it is superfluous that I write unto you. For I know the Forwardness of your Minds, for which I boast of you to them of Macedonia, that Achaia* (of which *Corinth* was the principal City) *was ready a Year ago; and your Zeal hath provoked many.* And St. Paul himself carried these Contributions to *Jerusalem*, as appears by what he tells the *Romans*, Ch. xv. 25. *But now I go to Jerusalem, to minister to the Saints. For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia, to make a certain Contribution for the poor Saints which are at Jerusalem.* And in saying this St. Paul sufficiently intimates to them, that it is their Duty to follow this Example; for he immediately subjoins these remarkable Words: *It hath*

bath pleased them verily, and their Debtors they are : So that in St. Paul's Judgment in doing this, they only paid a Debt ; For if the Gentiles, says he, have been made Partakers of their Spiritual Things, their Duty is also to minister unto them in carnal Things.

Thus ready were the first Christians to relieve the temporal and bodily Necessities of their Brethren by very liberal Contributions, even in Parts greatly distant and remote from them. But if they were thus forward to assist them in Things relating to the Body only, and for their Support and Maintenance during their short State of Pilgrimage here on Earth ; how much more ready may we suppose they were, to relieve their Spiritual Wants ; and in order to that, to provide a Maintenance where it was wanted, for those who would undertake the good Work of Preaching Christ to them that sat in Darkness, that they might be deliver'd from the Captivity and Slavery of Sin and Satan, and be converted and live, by being made the Sons of God, and Heirs of Eternal Salvation ? The Ministration of such Service not only supplies the earthly, the bodily, the temporary Wants of Men ; but what is infinitely more valuable, it supplies Wants which could not otherwise be supplied ; Wants, under which not their Bodies but their Souls must have perished everlastingly. For, *as those who have sinned in the*

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Law, shall be judged by the Law ; so the Scripture declares, that those who have sinned without Law, shall also perish without Law.

To give Light to them that sit in Darkness and the Shadow of Death, to proclaim Redemption to the Captive, to publish Pardon and Salvation to Men bound fast in the Chains of Sin, and for their Sin by the just Judgment of God reserved for *everlasting Chains of Darkness* in a future State, is the noblest, the most useful, the most excellent Charity Man can bestow upon his Fellow-Creatures ; and to deliver Men out of so much Misery, or to keep them from falling into it, is in Effect one and the same Thing, and equally charitable. But this is the End proposed by this Society. Some other charitable Institutions have by some been called in Question, and a Doubt has been made, whether upon the whole they were useful or not, on Account of some Inconveniencies they think they see in them, or seem to apprehend from them. I am far from thinking the Objections of such Men well founded, or of great Weight ; but made, 'tis certain, they have been, and still are. But no body, who calls himself a Christian, ever pretended to say, that Christianity ought not to be propagated : No body ever said, it was not for the Honour of God and his Christ, to make his Name known among the Gentiles, and to spread his Religion to the Ends of the Earth :
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No body ever maintained, it was not for the Benefit of Man to be taught the Knowledge of God, to be instructed in the Rules of Virtue, to be assured of the Pardon of his Sins, and to be entituled to the Privileges and Promises of the Gospel: Much less can any serious and sincere Christian be under any Doubt, whether he ought not to wish for, and in his Station endeavour to preserve, the Continuance of the Light of the Gospel, and prevent by all proper Methods, the Extinction of it in those Parts of the World, that have been peopled from their own Mother-Country. This is a Part impossible for Men to act, who have the Cause of Virtue and Religion at all at Heart, any Zeal for the Honour of God, or any Benevolence towards their Fellow-Creatures.

But if this Design be so good in its End, and so free from all Objections, 'tis not less unexceptionable in respect to the Means by which 'tis carried on, so far as this Society is concerned. Some Charities, which in themselves are right and highly commendable, have sometimes had the Misfortune to be so ill managed in some Respect or other, as greatly to discourage those who would otherwise have been willing and ready to concur in the Support of them; they have been either in unskilful or dishonest Hands; there have been either real or suspected Misapplications; private Interest has been thought to be served under Pretence

of publick Good, and Charity has been either injudiciously and unadvisedly administred, or diverted from its proper Channel to serve a Party. But the Design now before us is not only clear from all Imputations of every Kind, that could be a Blemish to it, but from every the least Suspicion of them; there is no Pretence to suspect want either of Ability or Integrity. No Persons can in Point of Ability be supposed better to understand what are the properest Methods to be taken for a successful Propagation of the Gospel. Their Education and Profession, the Study and Business of their Lives, in whom the Management of the Affairs of this Society chiefly is, are such as must naturally best qualify them for such an Undertaking. And if it could be apprehended, that their Studies and Employments here at home were not sufficient to make them the fittest Judges of the most proper Methods for propagating the Gospel in such distant Parts, and in Countries they are so unacquainted with, yet it must be allowed, that a long Experience has abundantly supplied all such supposed Defects. Experience is, in all Undertakings, of great Service; and nothing of Importance was ever yet entred on, that was at first so perfect, however able Hands it was in, as not to admit, upon repeated Tryals, of considerable Improvements. This Advantage this Society has been long possess'd of, and 'tis hardly

hardly to be thought, that any Thing now remains that can render those who shall come after, better qualified for the Management of this Charity, than those in whose Hands it at present is, and has long been. So that we have all the Certainty that any Man can reasonably desire, that this Design is not only well-meant, but carried on by Persons well qualified for it, and capable of conducting it in the best and most effectual Manner within their Power.

And if we are satisfied of their Ability for this good Work, we can't be less so of their Integrity. This we have not only the fullest Assurance of from their general Character in Point of Religion and Virtue, and from the disinterested Principles and Motives on which they first engaged in this Design, but from the visible Effects of it in the whole Course of their Proceedings. Here are no private or selfish Interests aimed at, no Party-Ends to be served; as they act upon the same generous Principles for the Service of our common Christianity, so they act with the greatest Unity, which is a sure Sign of the Uprightness of their Intentions; for where a Number of People acting in a voluntary Society have corrupt Views, they can't continue long united; Discord and Dissension will creep in, while each endeavour to serve their own sinister Ends. But nothing of this Kind has Place here; as they act upon the
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same Principles, they have all the same Views, and pursue the same End, to promote and advance, in the most effectual Manner, the righteous Work they are engaged in ; which is to propagate in Parts which so much want it, pure and genuine Christianity, reformed from the Corruptions of *Popery*, and as it is deliver'd to us in the Scriptures.

Their Design is not to propagate Popish Errors by Popish Methods, but Christian Truths by Christian Means ; and Men sincerely engaged in such a Cause will naturally preserve Unity among themselves as well as Charity. And what is further much to the Commendation of this Society, as they act with the strictest Unity, so they pursue their Work with the greatest Constancy and Diligence ; the Cause has never suffer'd through want of a steady Application to it ; they give their Time and Care to the Prosecution of this noble Undertaking, and that without the least personal Advantage or Profit to themselves, which is one of the best Proofs any Society of Men can give of their Integrity. And their whole Conduct is as great a Proof of their Prudence, as appears by the Rules they have prescribed themselves as the Measure of it ; what those Rules are, every one may see, since they are publick, and in Print. And give me Leave to add, that these Rules are not a dead Letter ; they are not Rules to be hung up, but
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never to be observed ; they are constantly and steadily pursued ; they are careful to make the necessary Enquiries, and get the best Information they can, into the State of Religion in our several Colonies ; they receive impartially and readily Applications from all Parts of them, and give their Help where 'tis most wanted, and in such Proportions as their Fund will permit, consistently with the great Variety of Demands made from so many Quarters. And as they are thus careful to learn what the Spiritual Wants of these poor People are, and to proportion their Provisions for them in the best, and most just, and most frugal Manner they can ; so are they in the Choice of those they send to preach the Gospel to them. It must be remembered, they have no compulsory Powers to oblige Persons to go upon such Missions, whether they will or no ; the Clergy of the Reformed Churches are not under absolute Vows of implicit Obedience to their Superiors, as they are in the Popish Seminaries. It must likewise be remembered, that the Reformed Clergy are not under Vows of Celibacy, as in the Church of *Rome*, which makes the Choice of Missionaries still more difficult ; since Persons who have Families can't be supposed so willing to transplant themselves into foreign Countries ; and if they were, the Expence attending it would unavoidably be much greater. It is not therefore

fore so easy to get such Missionaries as one could most wish for, and as some may expect they should, who have never thoroughly considered it. But if they can't do what they would in this Respect, 'tis certain they do what they can; they enquire with all due Care into the Characters of those who offer themselves for these Missions; and if they ever make a wrong Choice, the Fault is not theirs, but must be laid at their Door who have imposed on them by false Characters. But this, I apprehend, has very rarely been the Case, both from the great Precaution taken to prevent such Abuses, and from the few Complaints there have been of those who have been sent; who, that they may be able to discharge the pastoral Duty well, have very good and very particular Directions given them for their Conduct. And to enable them still further for a right Discharge of their Function, they not only give them good Instructions, but furnish them with good Books also. In short, they leave nothing undone, which it is in their Power to do, in this chief and principal Part of their Design, the sending Missionaries. But the Society have not stopt here, they have not only provided in the best Manner they could, Ministers with competent Salaries for the publick Worship of God, and a due Administration of his Word and Sacraments to these poor People, but Schools, and Masters,

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and Books, for the Education of their Children in Virtue, and the Principles of true Religion.

I might give many other Proofs of the Zeal and Care of this Society in the Prosecution of this good Work ; but more need not be said to shew, that this is a most useful and excellent Design, and that it requires a constant Attention, and great Prudence also, to carry it on successfully ; much more shall we be convinced of this, if we consider the vast Extent of the Countries to which the Care of this Society applies itself. So extensive an Undertaking, 'tis most evident, must be attended with a very considerable Expence, towards which they have no other Fund but what arises from their own Contributions, and those of other well-disposed Persons ; and if the whole Fund thus raised be compared with the Works in which it has been employ'd, this will demonstrably shew how frugally and prudently this great Design has been carried on, and that the Moneys given towards it have not been unnecessarily dispensed or misapplied. And whoever is able to form a true Judgment in a Work of this Nature, will rather wonder the Society have been able to do so much with so slender a Stock, than ask, why they have not done more ? a Question unthinking and unfriendly Men are forward to ask, partly from mistaking the true Design of this Institution, and partly from not sufficiently
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considering the many and great Difficulties such a Work is unavoidably attended with. Some Men from the Style of this Society, which is *for propagating the Gospel in foreign Parts*, are apt to think that their chief, if not sole Business is, to convert the wild *Indians*, and expect to hear of whole Tribes and Nations of them brought over by their Missionaries to the Christian Faith. But this is pure Mistake: This Society, as I have already observed, was incorporated for the Cultivation of the Christian Religion in our own Plantations; and among our own People, in such Places where they are so poor, as not to be able to maintain a Standing Ministry themselves, that the Knowledge of God, and a Sense of Virtue and Religion might be preserved among them. But if that had been the Design of this Society, could it be expected they should propagate the Gospel with the same Success, and make the same quick Progress in the Conversion of Nations, as the first Christians did? They who think so, know little of the Use of *Miracles*, the only possible Means of converting Multitudes at once, and subduing whole Nations to the Obedience of the Faith in a few Years, or of the Use of the *Gift of Tongues*, when the World is divided into so many Languages, which must be first learnt, before Conversions can possibly be begun. 'Tis evidently impossible, that those who want these Gifts of *Miracles*

Miracles and *Tongues*, should make Converts in such Numbers, or with such Dispatch, as those who had them. To these and other Differences between the primitive Times and those we live in, I wish I could not add the very different Lives of the Generality of Christians now from what they were then. This is not only one Difference, but next to *Miracles* and *Tongues* the greatest; there is a strange Charm in Piety and Virtue towards making Converts, where they shine out in an eminent Degree, in their genuine and native Lustre. People, even wild and savage People, will flock in, to a Religion, which they see has so great an Influence on those who recommend it to them; whereas on the other hand, they will suspect, dislike, detest a Religion, whose Professors they see, instead of being made by it more than Men, are in their Actions worse than Brutes, defiled with all Manner of Vice, full of Avarice, Luxury, Intemperance, and Lust, and breathing nothing but Cruelty, Falshood, and Revenge. I might add, that they who would convert now the *West-Indian* Nations, do not only want the Advantages they had in the primitive Times, but that the Work itself is in many Respects more difficult. Christianity at the Beginning was propagated in a World made up, not of an infinite Number of little Clans, using different Languages, and those totally unlike our *Euro-*

pean Tongues, barbarous in themselves, and independent of each other; but of great Nations, speaking many of them Languages, that have great Affinity, civilized by Arts, familiarized to one another by Commerce, and almost all under one Government; which, to pass by other Difficulties, makes the Conversion of the new World much harder than that of the old one.

But this, as I have said, is not the first and principal Design of this Society; their Business is to preserve a Sense of Virtue and Religion, and the Knowledge and Worship of the true God among our own People; and consistently with this, in the next Place to endeavour the Conversion of their Negroes, and then of such *Indians* as they have Commerce with, and who lie nearest to them. But if we confine their Business within its first and most proper Bounds, 'tis then difficult enough, a great deal more than they seem to apprehend, who are most ready to find Fault. Let them compare the Greatness of the Work with the Means furnished for carrying of it on, and they will see, that the ordinary Fund of the Society will scarce enable them to answer the many Demands they have for Missionaries in the poorer Settlements; much less can they send so many as a due Performance of the publick Service, and the Instruction of the People in Places of so great Extent reasonably require; or
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give them *such Allowances*, as such difficult, such laborious, and oftentimes dangerous Services well deserve. And still less able are they to maintain Schools and Masters sufficient for the Education of their Children, and to furnish them with the proper Books; much less can it be expected they should provide a competent Supply of Catechists, tho' so much wanted for the Instruction of the Children of our own People, and absolutely necessary for the Conversion of the Negroes. If the Contributions to this Society were double and treble to what they are, 'tis easy to see they might all be very usefully employ'd, tho' confined only to the *West-Indies*. If therefore so much has not been done as could be wished, 'tis not the Fault of the Society, but for Want of a sufficient Fund for it.

But if these Things are so, if the Design of this Society be so excellent and useful in its End, if this End be steadily pursued by the most proper Methods in their Power, if no Integrity or Zeal, no Care or Prudence has been wanting in the Execution of it, if the Moneys given for carrying on this Design have been applied in the best, the fairest, the most frugal Manner; if the End proposed can't be otherwise pursued or attained than by the liberal Contributions of charitable and well-disposed Persons; 'tis manifest this Charity has every Thing in it such Persons can wish for, to recommend it to their Favour and

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Encouragement. But if neither the Goodness of the Design consider'd in itself, nor the Fitness of the Means by which it is conducted, nor the Impossibility of its being otherwise carried on, can prevail with Men to contribute to it, let them in the last Place consider the Obligations they are under to support it, and the Interest which themselves and their Country have in it.

Can Men, who are in earnest Christians, not think it their Duty to propagate the Knowledge of Christianity? Can Christians, I say, think thus? For 'tis to them only I speak: We don't expect that Men who don't believe the Gospel, or who live as if they did not, should be zealous to promote the Knowledge of it; that they who would extinguish, if they could, Christianity at Home, would be forward to propagate the Knowledge and Practice of it in foreign Parts: No, this would be to expect, that *Satan should be divided against himself*: All one could ask of such Men, would be, not to obstruct what they will not promote; but that is asking a great deal too much; their Zeal for Infidelity carries them great Lengths; they are not content to corrupt the Principles of the young People of their own Country by writing and dispersing lewd, prophane, blasphemous Books, full of Infidelity and Atheism, and all Impiety; they have, with great Industry and at a considerable Expence, endeavoured to propagate

pagate Infidelity into these very Countries, as if it were to countermine the Measures taken by this Society for the Propagation of Christianity. To such therefore we do not address, but to the serious and good Christian, to those who are such in Reality as well as Name. He who truly believes in Christ himself, who thinks it his greatest Happiness that he was early call'd to the Knowledge of the Gospel, who has a just Sense of the Demerit of Sin, and of the Displeasure of God; that the Wages of Sin is Death, and that Pardon of Sin, and Salvation are attainable only thro' Faith in Christ: A Man with these Thoughts about him, must needs be convinced, that it is his Duty to promote, as he has Opportunities, the Propagation of the Gospel; his Love of God, and a true Zeal for his Honour, his Faith and Hope in Christ, will make him in the Sincerity of his Heart wish, that *his Ways may be known upon Earth, and his saving Health among all Nations*. But if this Love of God and Faith in Christ will powerfully engage him on this Side; so likewise will his Humanity and Benevolence, the Love of his own Species, of Creatures made in all Things like himself, in the Image of the same God, and as Men entituled to the same Redemption by Christ, upon performing the Conditions of it. Such a Man can't behold infinite Numbers of his Fellow-Creatures dead as it were while alive, and
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buried in Ignorance and gross Darkness, and not be sensibly touch'd at their great Unhappiness, Slaves to Sin and Satan, without any Knowledge of God, or any Sense of Virtue.

But if Christians, really such, could be insensible of their Obligations to this Duty, ('tis indeed impossible they should, but if it could be) can it be thought for the Interest of a Christian Country not to promote by all proper Methods, the Knowledge of the Gospel in Colonies derived from them, and preserve them in the Obedience of the Faith in Christ? What can we think would be the Consequence, should that Day ever come, that those Countries should be totally overspread with Infidelity and Irreligion, with Pagan Ignorance, and a Want of all virtuous and moral Principles? What Fidelity can Masters expect from such Servants, or Princes from such Subjects? Will true Faith and Obedience to Man subsist, when all Sense of God is lost? Monstrous Supposition! The only true Security Masters and Princes can have in Servants and Subjects, is a strong and lively Sense that they are under the Eye of an all-seeing God, who will, if not in this Life, yet most certainly at the Last Day, severely punish Falshood and Disobedience. And if this Sense of an over-ruling Providence and a future Judgment be once extinguish'd, no Superiors can be safe in the Promises,

mises or Oaths, or any other the most solemn Engagements of those under them. So that it is above all Things the Interest of Princes, and of all other Persons vested with any Kind of Power and Authority, whether publick or domestick, to cultivate the Principles of Religion in all who are in their Service, and under their Government. 'Tis therefore greatly the Concern of this Nation, and more particularly of those who have Possessions or Commerce in those Countries, to preserve and support the Knowledge and Practice of Religion in them. And if this was not taken due and proper Care of in the first Settlement of these Colonies, there is the more Reason for them to concur heartily in the Measures which have been since entred into for this good End. They ought not only willingly and chearfully, but thankfully to contribute towards it, since so necessary an End, in which their own private Interests are so greatly concerned, may now thro' the Care of this Society be effectually provided for, upon comparatively easy Terms.

Nothing is truer than this, and yet there is but too much Reason to fear, that some who are most interested in this Affair, are least sensible of the great Importance of it, as if they thought their Interest best served by People most devoid of the Knowledge of God, and of all Sense of Religion: They don't indeed in direct Terms say so, but the Back-

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wardness some have shewn to promote this good Work, and the Obstructions others have given to it, too evidently prove, that whatever their Pretences be, this in Reality is the true Reason, why they discourage the Instruction of these poor People in the Knowledge of Religion. But surely if Men would thoroughly consider Things, they could not be in these Sentiments; but admit it were in some Respects more for their worldly Interest to keep these People in Ignorance of every Thing that leads towards God and Virtue; yet, if they had any true Sense of Religion themselves, or any Concern for the Souls of their Fellow-creatures, (for such they are, how meanly soever they may think of them) they could not be unwilling to procure to them the infinite and unspeakable Benefits Believers have in Christ, at the Expence of some little Inconvenience to themselves. But this in Reality neither is, nor can be the Case; all the Service a reasonable Man, and one who has any Humanity, can expect, may and will be had from Servants under the Influence and Power of Religion; and what can't be expected from such Servants, should not be exacted from any. But this Subject has been so well handled more than once in this Place, that I shall not enlarge further on it.

The Interest the Publick has in these Colonies is of much greater Importance; it concerns those therefore who have the Interest

est of their Country at Heart, to consider well what will be the Consequence, with Relation to the Publick, of a general Decay of virtuous Principles, of the over-spreading of Infidelity, and of an universal Ignorance in Matters of Religion. Nothing can be more certain, than that there can be no Dependance on the Fidelity of a People so corrupted; but if even such a People could be depended on, if a People who have no Sense of God and Religion left, could be faithful to their Mother-Country, what Assurance have we, that if neglected by us, they shall not be seduced to Popery, which it appears by the Charter of this Society, was then apprehended would be one Consequence of our Neglect of them. We all know the indefatigable Industry and Zeal of Popery in making Profelytes: We see too much of this here at home, to make any Doubt of their Activity and Diligence, where they would have, thro' our Negligence, such promising Hopes of a plentiful Harvest. And if these People should be thus seduced, what may we not then apprehend would be the Consequence? Would they not be tempted by the most delusive Arts to throw off their Dependance on *Great Britain*, and either to set up for themselves, or betray those Countries to our Enemies? How ill we could bear the Loss of those Countries, no body can want to be told, who knows the Interest we have in

the Preservation of them ; but if it would be so prejudicial to us not to have them with us, what would it be to have them in an Enemies Hand, and turned against us ? It would not perhaps be difficult to shew, that the Cultivation of Virtue and Religion in these Colonies is, in our Situation, the surest as well as cheapest Way to preserve the Interest we have in them. But however that be, it must be allowed, that this is one great Means, one very proper Way to secure this important Article ; and that is enough not only to make all Persons who have a warm Sense of Religion upon their Minds themselves, but all others also without Exception, who have a real Concern for the Interest of their Country, Friends to this Society, and willing to support it by their Contributions, that they may be able not only to carry on, but to improve and extend the Design they are so worthily engaged in.

But the best Motive to this Charity, is a Zeal for the Honour of God, and of our Saviour, and a Love and Concern for our Fellow-creatures, in Things of the utmost Importance to them, on which both their present and future Happiness, the most solid Comfort under all Vicissitudes in this Life, and the Eternal Salvation of their Souls depends. This Motive, I can't but hope, will have a due Influence on all serious and well-disposed Minds, and incline them strongly to

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give their Help towards the Maintenance of Missionaries, where they are so much wanted; *Since there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men, whereby we must be saved, but the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ; neither is there Salvation in any other.* But how shall they call on him, of whom they have not heard; and how shall they hear without a Preacher; and how shall they preach, except they be sent? And sent, we are sensible, they can't be, but thro' the Benevolence of those who shall liberally contribute towards it, since no other Provision is made for it.

Consider of it, take Advice, and act like Men, who have a Zeal for God, and are desirous to express the Sincerity of their Love to him by a sincere Love of their Brethren, who, however separated and distant in Place from them, yet are by Nature and many other Ties related to them. That this pious and good-natured Zeal may be kindled in all our Hearts, to the Glory of the Father, *who would have all Men to be saved,* and of the Son, who *died for all Men,* and commanded his Gospel *to be preached to all Nations,* God of his infinite Mercy grant; to whom, with the Son and Holy Spirit be all Honour, Glory, and Power, now and ever.

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